Digital Technology Trends #22
by Howie Fenton, NAPL

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Welcome to the 22nd issue of Digital Technology Trends. In the last issue I mentioned that something big was coming from my company, NAPL. Its now official. Susan Reif, NAPL's senior director of Professional Development is moving from New Jersey to Wisconsin to relocate NAPL's training programs to the campus of Waukesha County Technical College in Pewaukee. I think this is a bold move enabling us to offer hands on training programs, gain an affiliation with a accredited college and offer programs more centrally. I am in talks with Sue to offer hands on training. I hope to see you there!

http://members.whattheythink.com/news/newslink.cfm?id=18356

⏩ Next Generation Color Devices are coming

If you've visited any printing shows lately you may have heard the predictions that the black and white laser printers and copiers in your homes (personal multifunction) and offices (workgroup multifunction) are soon going to be replaced by color devices.

If you have your own office at home, you know that buying and supporting a copier, fax machine and printer can be expensive and takes up a lot of space. Therefore, a trend today is to sell one device that does it all or the multifunction printer /copier or MFP.

These next generation devices are targeted to small and medium sized businesses, home offices as well as offices in Fortune 500 companies. Besides the obvious upgrade to color printing other advantages include using a networked device for scanning and copying.

The criteria for these devices are speed (how quickly it warms up, prints, copies, and scans), cost (of the device and for the consumables) and output quality. Another key criteria is the integration of the multiple functions. In some of these devices use different switches for different parts and may have poor integration of the different features.

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One of the complicating factors is which technology to choose: laser (toner) verses inkjet devices. Here are a few general observations:

- inkjet devices are cheaper then lasers ($100-$300 vs. $300-$1000)
- consumables are less for laser devices (total cost per color page 1-2¢ vs. 10-20¢) therefore higher volumes of work (6-8,000 pages a year) are done more efficiently on a laser device
- lasers are usually faster, better suited for higher volumes and have better paper handling and more paper options
- if you print infrequently, laser / toner printers have the hidden advantage of not drying out. Inkjet heads can dry-out cartridges clogging nozzles and wasting expensive ink and time
- laser devices print sharper lines and text but inkjets print better pictures
- standalone inkjet printers can print outstanding pictures but multifunction inkjets generally do not achieve the same quality
- standalone scanners can achieve high quality scanning but multifunction scanners are usually not as good

http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,117567,00.asp
http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,17322,00.asp

⏵ Consolidation of Digital Standards Groups

The DDAP Association (Digital Distribution of Advertising for Publications) announced recently that it will join with the IDEAlliance (International Digital Enterprise Alliance), an association advancing standards and best practices for publishing and content-driven enterprises.

You may recall that SWOP (Specifications for Web Offset Publications), a leader in the publication printing industry charged with ensuring consistency and quality of materials in publications, joined with the IDEAlliance (International Digital Enterprise Alliance) in July 2004.

The goal of this new partnership is to promote the adoption of specifications and guidelines through the development of an industry-wide best practices initiative. The new organization will be able to take advantage of the IDEAlliance's educational seminars and support networks. DDAP members will be offered the opportunity to transition their current DDAP membership into an IDEAlliance network group membership.

DDAP will be working specifically with the newly launched IDEAlliance Print Properties Committee and Digital Ad Lab to align PDF/X initiatives within North America, and create synergies and build consensus with standards work underway internationally.

www.DDAP.com

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⊷ Xerox's Gil Hatch Center opens with new products

On March 9, 2005, Xerox opened the World's Largest Showcase of Digital Production Printing Technology. The 100,000-square-foot facility represents the vision of Gil Hatch, the former president of Xerox's Production Systems Group who passed away last summer after a long battle with cancer.

Hatch was a noted customer champion who believed that "everything we do begins and ends with the customer." He was a leader in the graphic communications field and helped propel Xerox to the forefront of the digital printing industry.

In her opening remarks, CEO Anne Mulcahy noted that "there is no better investment of Xerox money than the new facility." Recalling Gil Hatch as a "true customer champion," Mulcahy further remarked that the Center for Customer Innovation is absolutely the right name to honor Gil's achievements and service to Xerox. In an industry filled with marketing hype and spins, Gil was a refreshing leader with his uncanny candor.

At the launch Xerox introduced the iGen3 110 Digital Production Press and the Nuvera 100/120 MX with MICR (Magnetic Ink Character Recognition) capabilities. The iGen3 110 prints 110 letter sized pages-per-minute and smaller sheet sizes at up to 120 ppm.

The new Xerox Nuvera 100 / 120 MX devices, are high speed black and white printers based on the Docutech product line that also provide MICR (Magnetic Ink Character Recognition) capabilities which are used to produce checks.

Even more exciting announcements are coming from Xerox in the office marketplace. Non disclosure agreements prevents any details but suffice it to say it will be a competitively priced, color, multifunction printer with some unique competitive advantages. Watch for the announcement on March 30, 2005.

http://www.xerox.com/go/xrx/template/inv_rel_newsroom.jsp?Xcntry=USA&Xlang=en_US&app=Newsroom&ed_name=NR_2005March8_GilHatchCentre&format=article&view=newsrelease&metrics=notrack

http://www.xerox.com/go/xrx/template/inv_rel_newsroom.jsp?Xcntry=USA&Xlang=en_US&app=Newsroom&ed_name=NR_2005March8_iGen3_110&format=article&view=newsrelease&metrics=notrack

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⇥ Catalogers Use Internet Better but not Key Data

According to Catalog Age's (CA) latest Benchmark Report on Marketing, catalogers are increasing their use of the internet but don't seem to perform a great deal of research. In December 2004, Primedia e-mailed invitations for an online survey to 3,619 subscribers of Catalog Age. Of the 3,056 deliverable surveys, 84 completed surveys were received, for an response rate of 2.7%.

The internet is a relatively new tool for catalogers. Two years ago CA didn't even ask catalogers if they used e-mail, search engine marketing (a.k.a. paid search), or search engine optimization (unpaid search) to gather names. The good news is that this year these were among the popular alternative prospecting methods: 84% used e-mail, 62% paid search, and 75% search optimization.

The bad news is that catalogers twenty-two percent of respondents said their company doesn't bother to conduct any sort of market research. The same percentage said they don't calculate how much money they spend per prospect, while 28% didn't know how much it costs them on average to acquire a customer. More than one-fourth (28%) said they didn't know how many purchases a customer had to make before he could be marketed to profitably. More disturbing, 66% of participants said that they don't conduct customer lifetime value studies.

Marketing data as well as demographic data is more important then ever. A look at average response rates suggests as much. The average mean house file response rate among this year's respondents was 4.9%. That's a 17% decline from the mean 5.9% house file response among participants in the previous survey. Among consumer catalogers, the mean house file response rate remained flat at 5.0%. Business-to-business respondents, however, suffered a steep decline, from a mean 6.9% two years ago to 5.4% this year.

Response rates from outside lists slipped less dramatically, to a mean 1.3% from 1.4% among respondents two years earlier. But the mean conversion rate of leads to buyers for paid catalogs dropped from 8.2% two years ago to 6.4% among this year's respondents. For free catalogs, the mean conversion rate of leads to buyers fell from 8.1% to 5.9%.

Due to these declining response rates catalogers are trying more alternative prospecting methods. Forty-one percent of this year's respondents used solo product offers, for instance, compared with 30% of survey respondents two years earlier. And whereas just two years ago only 44% of respondents used their Website to acquire names, 95% of this year's participants said they prospect via their Website.

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Interested in the complete results from Catalog Age's exclusive Benchmark Survey on Marketing, go to www.CatalogAgemag.com and click the "Research Store" link on the left-hand navigation bar under "Resources," or contact Lynn Adelmund (913-967-1891; ladelmund@primediabusiness.com).

http://industryclick.com/magazinearticle.asp?magazineid=153&releaseid=12912&magazinearticleid=214486&siteid=2

⇥ Adults better Web surfers than teens

Frustrated by your kids seemingly superior skills on the internet? If you are then you may be interested to learn that, teenagers aren't as adept as adults when it to comes to using the Internet. Teens ages 13 to 17 were able to complete assigned tasks on the Web 55 percent of the time, compared with 66 percent for adults, according to Nielsen Norman in Fremont, a firm known for studying how consumers use technology. The teens in the study, from California, Colorado and Australia, didn't like to read long blocks of text, preferring illustrations and pictures. They quickly gave up on sites once they encountered navigation and other problems. They also displayed poor searching skills, usually clicking on the first hit after a search query. The teens were hampered by poor reading and research skills and were more prone to leave a site after encountering difficulties.

http://www.siliconvalley.com/mld/siliconvalley/business/columnists/gmsv/10787236.htm

⇥ Screen Printing and Wide-Format Inkjet to Co-Exist

According to a new white paper entitled "Digital Production and Screen Printing - There's Plenty of Room for Both" from InfoTrends/CAP Ventures' there is room in the marketplace for both inkjet and screen printing technologies.

The advantages of the screen process is that it is the most versatile printing technique. It can be used on all materials, including paper, board, plastics, fabrics, glass, wood, and metals, without any real restrictions in terms of size, thickness, or shape. In terms of color depth and flexibility, inkjet printers cannot yet match the output produced from a screen printing press.

Inkjet has proven strengths of its own, however, particularly where short-run lengths, one-offs, and jobs containing variable data are required. Additionally, with the capability to print applications up to 5 meters wide, inkjet is well suited for large-format jobs

http://www.creativepro.com/story/news/22636.html

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⇥ Kids Consume Media Like Candy

When I walk into my family room, it's not unusual to see my 13 year old son Geoff with his Playstation on, the computer logged onto the Apple Itunes music site and either his cell phone or his Ipod in his ear. OK no jokes about the Apple falling far from the tree.

I thought was unusual until I read a report from the Kaiser Family Foundation, entitled "Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-olds". The study of more then 2,000 kids showed that youths are increasing the time they spend with "new media" (computers, Internet and video games) without shedding the old (TV, print and music). Consequently, students are stuffing an increasing amount of media content into their lives, using more than one medium at a time and packing 8 1/2 hours of media content into just under 6 1/2 hours each day.

The study also found that children's bedrooms are plugged-in places, with two-thirds having a TV in their bedroom. The percent of kids with VCR or DVD players in their rooms rose to 54 percent from 36 percent over the last five years, and 37 percent have cable or satellite television.

After the report's findings were announced, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton delivered a keynote address as part of a panel discussion in Washington. Clinton called children's heavy media diet "as important a public health issue as any we can address," one that touches on everything from childhood behavior to obesity.

The saturation presents a dual challenge, she said: Parents face new obstacles when it comes to monitoring their children's viewing habits, and the impact of such non-stop exposure is unknown.

Personally, I see this as a 2 edged sword. Kids skills on the internet, comfort with multiple forms of media and video games can be positive. The increased hand eye coordination, expertise with internet key word searches, problem solving and computer skills can be invaluable for many jobs. On the other hand, some of the issues include: a link between video games and poor socialization skills, a link between video games, a sedentary lifestyle and childhood obesity, and risks associated with unsupervised access to the net. I think having all this stuff in the family room and the AOL Guardian software helps. Tune in later to hear about our success with a local gym :)

http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia030905pkg.cfm

Media dates to remember
  March 24: Playstation PSP release http://www.us.playstation.com
  May 19: Star Wars 3: Revenge of the Sith http://www.starwars.com/

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⟩⟩ Netscape v8 Beta released

Netscape has made a public release of Netscape Browser 8.0 Beta for the Windows platform available. The browser is based on Mozilla Firefox 1.0 and offers support for both the Gecko (Mozilla) and Internet Explorer rendering engines.

It promises more security by updating your browser with a "trust list" of safe and suspected sites. It warns you of insecure Web sites before you enter them. It also features tabbed browsing and multiple toolbars, giving you a more spacious display for viewing content.

Site Controls allows users to enable and disable features like ActiveX and cookies on a per site basis. Multi-Bar allows users to have many screen widgets like map searches, RSS feeds, and weather forecasts. The browser can automatically fill in forms and encrypt the login information you use. Finally, the browser offers "live content" so you can view headlines from a small window on your desktop.

http://browser.netscape.com/nsb/download/default.jsp

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